Pregnancy, breastfeeding and COVID-19

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada recommends that all individuals who are pregnant, trying to become pregnant or breastfeeding remain up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations. Being vaccinated protects you from serious outcomes from COVID-19 and provides added protection to your baby.

CONTRACTING COVID-19 WHILE PREGNANT

Pregnant individuals who get COVID-19 have a **higher risk** of requiring breathing support and being admitted to intensive care than non-pregnant individuals

COVID-19 infection increases the risk of premature delivery, low birth weight and admission to neonatal intensive care unit (NICU)

Pregnant individuals who contract COVID-19 are:

2 **times** more likely to be hospitalized

5 **times** more likely to be admitted to the ICU

2 **times** more likely to require ventilation/life support breathing

GET THE VACCINE IF YOU ARE PREGNANT - INCLUDING BOOSTER DOSES

You can **safely** get the COVID-19 vaccine (including the bivalent booster) at any stage of pregnancy or trying to become pregnant. There is no evidence to suggest that COVID-19 vaccines will affect fertility, cause any harm to the fetus or the pregnant individual. You can also continue breastfeeding as the vaccine does not pass into breast milk.

Protection from a previous vaccine or COVID-19 infection lessens over time. Stay up to date to ensure the strongest and longest-lasting protection. This includes any booster doses you are eligible for. New bivalent booster doses offer enhanced protection against all Omicron variants.

COVID-19 can be a very severe disease to people at any age. The risk of complications or severity from COVID-19 **far outweigh** any potential risk from COVID-19 vaccination. Vaccination protects against infection and severe illness and helps prevent you from passing illness onto your child and other loved ones.

Studies suggest the protective antibodies your body develops following vaccination while pregnant will pass to your baby, which may keep them **safe after birth** (and before they can get their vaccine at 6 months of age) and will pass into your breastmilk, helping to protect your child.

Infants of people who are vaccinated with a second or third dose during pregnancy have lower rates of infection and risk of hospitalization with COVID-19 in the first four to six months of life.

Visit **york.ca/covid19vaccine** to find a location near you to receive a vaccine or speak to your health care provider for more information. More breastfeeding tips and resources can be found at **york.ca/breastfeeding**

You can also speak with a Public Health Nurse about pregnancy, breastfeeding, mental health or COVID-19 by calling York Region Health Connection at **1-800-361-5653**.

York Region